

TRANSFORMATION

Many people before us showed us that they could make a difference.

Martin Luther King had a dream. He was willing to fight for equal rights for black and white in the 1960s. Back then this was unthinkable, but now equality became a first right in our democratic societies.

Right now, there is still much of change needed. Our societies are ruled by money and individualism and this influences our daily lives. Is anyone willing to step in the areas of business, arts, government, education, media, families and even churches to bring God's principles there? Who will initiate tomorrow's transformations?



Bring the change by being the change Respond to what you are called for

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I Have a Dream

Each one of us has an individual purpose and calling on this earth. Joseph, also known as “the dreamer” in the bible, was called to be a Prime Minister and provided food in a season of extreme shortage for entire nations. Moses was called to liberate the Jews from the terrible slavery in Egypt. William Wallace dreamt and fought for his land's independence from English domination. Another fighter was William Wilberforce. He couldn't stand the harsh slave trade and committed his life to abolish slavery. Martin Luther King had a dream regarding racial equality and the end of discrimination. I have a dream. I am sure you have one too. If not, think of something that makes you restless, something that extremely touches you or something that affects you more than anything else. That particular thing is continuously itching inside, it is like a

hunger, a burning flame within. It just won't let you be indifferent from it... do you know what? Your dream and calling is not far away from that! Your dream includes that particular issue being solved.

An Even Bigger Dream

So, you're a Christian. You are part of His Church and live your life on this planet. But what do you do with this dream? Why is it there? Where does it fit? Let's see what God's word tells us about this. The Bible is very clear about what the Church is and what is expected from Her. I decided to use the pronoun Her because the Church is not merely a thing. The bible tells us that the Church is the Lord Jesus' bride and body. Let's continue on this topic of the church being a body. A body is composed of several organs, each organ is made from tissues and each tissue contains millions of individual cells. If the bible

compares the Church to a body, I guess the smallest individual part within the body is a cell, even though a cell has its own micro-organs. Being this way, I am a cell within this worldwide body, you are also one cell, from the same tissue or not, from the same organ or not, but what still holds us working together is the protein laminin. Biologically, laminin is the protein that allows adhesion between cells. Curiously, laminin's shape is a cross; which also holds us connected as the body of Christ. Because of one cross, where a sinless man died to pay for all our sins, we are redeemed! By following Jesus, we all become His Church!

I would like you to follow this approach and meditate on the following conclusion: An individual cell of the body has its own purpose, as well as each organ, but together they all cooperate for something bigger, the entire body's

May Your Kingdom come May Your will be done

purpose. In the same way, our individual dreams and callings work together to fulfill a bigger dream. All our dreams joined together fulfill the Church's dream.

What is the dream of the Church? In Matthew 6, when Jesus taught us how to pray, you can see what comes immediately after honoring God's name: "may Your kingdom come, may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven".

Our personal calling is certainly doing what God expects us to accomplish, it is His will in our lives. His will in my life, plus His will in your life, plus His will in every member of His Church's life, is equal to His Kingdom coming! This is the Church's dream!



From dream to reality

Our dreams may include the end of poverty in our neighborhood, eliminating crime in our city, providing jobs to our entire generation, helping those in need. If we want to prosper in our endeavors and in any field of our society we must know what's God's perspective on it is. Before starting the actions we should know the concepts. But where can we find them? Asking for the Kingdom to come and for God's will to be done is an empty petition if we don't have in mind the big picture. But where is it?

We can consider the Old Testament of the Bible as a great history database. Making it short, the books of the Old Testament illustrate the various stages in the history of Israel as nation and their relation with God. God made a promise to Israel to make them a great nation and He fulfilled it. He built a great nation in various ways. Israel had righteous laws. They were economically prosperous. Their architecture and art were brilliant. They had wisdom and higher education. One of their kings, Solomon was a great scientist. They were admired even by their former overlords, the Egyptians. They were not a perfect nation, in any way, since God had never promised that, but they were a famous nation. The history of Israel has not been written only to be used as a parable of which we can derive messages about salvation. We can view it only that way if we want, however the text refers to history - it happened in time and space with real people, with a specific nation.¹

God revealed to the Hebrews how to prosper and how to live in society. The results of this remain visible until today. Probably the country that should have received the most Nobel Prizes is Israel because most of the Nobel laureates are Jews (even if they

got the prize for another country). Israel is ranked among the top 10 clean technology countries and agriculture in Israel is a highly developed industry. We can end with a single disturbing question: Have you ever seen a Jewish community living in poverty?

These facts have a reason behind them. The rules of how to live in community are God given instructions that the Jewish follow carefully.

Ok, here I could start opening my umbrella or any other protection device against stoning, but before grabbing a stone to throw at me, I ask you to please read this paragraph until the end. God gave the people of Israel a series of commandments and instructions that are often called "The Law". They can be found in the books written by Moses - mainly in Deuteronomy - and those instructions are still being followed by the Jews. When Jesus came, He added the concepts of grace and mercy, but he "*didn't come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; He did not come to abolish, but to fulfill*" (Matthew 5:17). Also, in Romans 6:14 it is stated that, we "*are not under the law, but under grace*", but we do follow and serve the same God that gave the law to the Jews. God is the same yesterday, tomorrow and for eternity. So, what can we learn from Jewish law if we are not under its jurisdiction? We can learn from it's principles. Of course circumstances of the Jews at that time were not the same as we face today! God gave them rules according to His principles so they could prosper under that conjuncture. Accordingly, what we shall focus on is God's principles for all the main Institutions of our society. What is God's outlook on society? There are several ways of partitioning the main Institutions of society but the most simple is separating them into seven spheres, or as it is called frequently "The seven spheres of influence". Basically, it divides society into seven areas where, if biblical principles are applied the entire nation prospers. These areas are: Government & Law, Business & Economics, Family, Education, Media, Arts & Entertainment and Religion.

There is an expression that says it is easy to see whether a principle is established by God: if it is, then that principle will always work. Just pick an object, raise your hand with the object then open your hand! I assure you that this object will fall to the ground due to gravity. This principle always works! Gravity is a principle of God. What kind of principles are those connected to each area of our society's culture? I will here share a glance from the bible on all of them.

For example, when studying about **government** in the Bible, we are looking at the legislative, executive, judicial and military government. One of the fundamental principles found in Deuteronomy is that the main purpose of government is to *serve the population of a nation, providing a reliable and objective arbitration and justice*. A second principle of government is that God gives the authority of the Government to the nation. God decreed by law the right and responsibility for the people to choose who would govern them. God instituted a *bottom-up line of authority*.

Regarding **business and economics**, the principles say that we must *maintain integrity, limit personal debts, eliminate poverty, avoid the national debt and wisely handle the legitimate needs of people in general*.²

God's principles make us understand that **family** is the root of culture. Family is the *first line of defense in values such as education, morality, provision, justice and love*. Also through family the *Father is revealed*.³

According to God's principles, **education** reveals the attributes of *wisdom and knowledge*; by its nature it is an individual

process. Its mission is to support the necessary development of the gifts and talents given by God to all children in the service of individuals and society as a whole. In all this, it is believing that *each one has the right to develop these gifts to their fullest potential*. Parents have authority and responsibility in the education of their children.⁴

The mission of **communication** is to provide truthful and objective information of importance to the whole society so that citizens can make their decisions based upon knowledge.⁵

Arts and entertainment exist to provide rest and renewal to the soul through beauty and joy. It's about worshipping.⁶

The principles of the **Church** became clear when Jesus came to Earth. The first one is that it was God who chose us first. We are called His royal priesthood and *living temples making no separation between what is secular and to what is holy*.

We could keep exploring God's principles related to any subject in life, but I believe it is an extensive work worthy of being a university degree. I encourage you to turn to your Bible and start reading while focusing on principles applicable to any particular area of culture. It will help you to understand what God's will is.

Knowing God's principles enlightens us about what is actually means when His will is done here on Earth as in Heaven. I would say it is the qualitative call, and being so, His Kingdom coming is the quantitative side of it. How's that? A kingdom is what a king has sovereignty over. God has sovereignty over everything that exists, but our lives are the target of His love. His Kingdom is about having Him as our personal King over our lives and everything we do. The Kingdom grows when more people enthrone Jesus and start acting under radical obedience to Him.

Applying God's principles will create visible and tangible results. This is well understood through the Hebrew concept of a blessing, being a tangible manifestation of the intangible. The goodness of God meant that people were bound to have food, clothing and shelter in an adequate proportions. The very Hebrew word **shalom** actually implied the concept of material blessings, but the English word that should define this same concept is **righteousness**.⁷ This means that God's principles were meant to affect



Who is going to bring Gods principles in Business and Education?

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the circumstance, they were meant to bring *shalom*.

Jesus extended the dream!

As mentioned before, when Jesus came to earth, He added to the known principles the concepts of grace and mercy. We can learn in the New Testament not only from the words spoken by Jesus but also from the ways that the Early Church lived and worked to impact their environment.

It is indisputable that Jesus left us a primary task: *"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."* Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV). This direct order fits perfectly in the dream of the growing Kingdom and if we focus the latter part, it says to teach disciples with everything He commanded - teaching God's principles! It's not only about making the Kingdom to grow but also to do God's will.

Secondly, Jesus taught about the importance of loving our neighbor as ourselves. To illustrate who the neighbor was, Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan. In fact, the man in the story was not of extraordinary kindness. He did what Jesus told us to be the normal procedure using this same parable. The principles contained in the parable are **commitment** to those we help and that

our

neighbor can be any person to whom we have nothing in common.

Another principle taught by Jesus is **charity**, benevolent giving with expecting nothing in return. A great example about it is stated in Matthew 25:35-40 *"For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you brought Me together with yourselves and welcomed and entertained and lodged Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me with help and ministering care, I was in prison and you came to see Me. (...) Truly I tell you, in so far as you did it for one of the least (in the estimation of men) of these My brethren, you did it for Me."* The principle of charity touches intimately on the principles of poverty removal from society and on how to be a community. God loves people but hates poverty. He destroyed the power of poverty at the cross.⁸

The first Christians understood very well the concept of **living in community** that is related to charity. In II Corinthians 8:15 we can notice it: *"as it is written: 'The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.'" Reading this verse we understand they loved their neighbors and when a person lacked something, someone else immediately went to meet that need as an act of commitment. Even the label *Christian* has its reason for being. In ancient Rome the followers of Christ from the first centuries impacted society and transformed all situations of need they encountered. They gathered up the*

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Extending His Kingdom and doing His will on Earth as in heaven.

orphans from the streets and adopted them, they treated the sick by taking them to their homes, which was totally against Roman culture. They were so different that the other people had to name them. They named them as the Christians. It's a powerful name what we carry!

Christianity is intimately related to going to the center of needs and solving their origins according to the heavenly principles that God teaches. Throughout history we have examples of committed Christians that had a dream and wanted to apply Heavenly principles around them. They fought, worked hard and even died for it. There are a few listed in the first part of this article and many more in the books and movies that inspire us today.

As the prophet Amos said in Amos 9:13 *"the days are coming, says the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper"*. We are in the midst of an ongoing intergenerational work, we benefit from what has been achieved before and our fruits are increasing fast.

God's dream for His Church is about having us as co-creators with Him, extending His Kingdom and doing His will on Earth as in heaven.

So, You know the truth? Do something!

You may know all God's principles, will and purposes. You may have a moment of inspiration and revelation, but without taking the next step into practice, the process stalls and there is no renewal.⁹

As Christians we have been used to an attitude of maintaining the status quo, asking God to protect us so our situation keeps unchanged. Shouldn't we question whether this passive attitude is what God expects from us?

Yes, it's correct that we must *"be sober and vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"* - 1 Peter 5:8 - but there's much more to do!

The Great Commission's backbone is that we transform our surroundings in a bright place saturated with the power and presence of God. It is implied in extending His Kingdom.¹⁰

Jesus came to reclaim two lost things: humanity and dominion over this planet. With his death, Jesus re-conquered authority over the entire earth and hell. We have the key to the treasures of heaven!¹¹ The only way to extend the Kingdom is taking territory back! Satan has no authority over men unless it's given to him. Unfortunately, this happens by default in each one's life due to our sinful inheritance. Due to this fact, the correct attitude as Christians is not being defensive but to attack, to take back what has been stolen!

From all the businesses with high influence in our society, banks are certainly at the top of the list. Until I started to study management, I frequently questioned why banks needed to have huge buildings and hire so many people. I thought that if all we do is go to the main desk and all they do is receive and keep our

money then what was all the rest needed for? Then I learnt that in companies there are two types of activities: front desk activities, which are done in the client's awareness and secondly, back office activities which relates to running the company itself. Those two types of activities work in strong cooperation.

I found that kingdom activity isn't any different. The rulership of God is asserted through two very important yet not exclusive dimensions: prayer and radical obedience. While our works are perceived by all those around us (front desk), these works must be the result of an extreme intimacy with God, **praying**, being directed and in intercession for the spiritual world to move (back office). Is your back office working in accordance to your front desk? For the spiritual realm influences the physical one. According to Ephesians 6:12 *"our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."* Jesus made praying a fundamental pillar of His life and we can read several episodes in the gospels where Jesus retires to pray, taking entire nights or long periods to do so. This was of extreme importance so He could walk in total obedience with the Father and perform all the glorious miracles He did.

God once told King Solomon when his people were facing difficulties: *"if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will **heal their land.**"* 2 Chronicles 7:14. Our commitment and humility towards God has positive effects over the land where we are. Paul was also well aware of this and exhorted us to pray at all time: *"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching there unto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints"* Ephesians 6:17-18. The reason why God commands us to pray and fast is because through those actions we exercise authority through the Holy Spirit. That breaks bonds and promotes deliverance.

Praying is an investment. An investment is an expenditure of resources (mainly money or time) with the expectation of gain. God values our time and when time is spent in prayer God assures He listens and Heaven is moved. No endeavor can achieve successful results without investment. Prayer is certainly a key component of this investment. There is a famous quote from St. Augustine that says: "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you." Somewhere in between is the equilibrium point.

Having an equilibrium point between two inputs shows us we must have concern about both inputs, ie. both prayer and **physical work**.

I believe we are meant to be change-agents, which means we are the ones bringing the change. In all circumstances we should never forget we are ambassadors of heaven on Earth. It's written in Colossians 3:17 that *"whatsoever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."* When talking about doing things in Jesus' name, we tend to associate it only with what James said in chapter 1:27 *"Pure religion"*

The term Responsibility can be splitted like this:

Response according to Ability

and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” It’s easier to accommodate the Holy tasks under the charity label, but if what is said in the Bible is to do all things in the name of Jesus: it than applies to all actions we endeavor. According to this perspective, if 70% of our time is spent in the workplace, it is a fundamental environment where we can do things in Jesus name.

Social transformation is about considering the normal Christian life as partnership between God and us.¹² We can’t demand God to come with all the solutions, we must co-labour with Him starting in our own lives and infecting everything that is around. The Church won’t transform cities only through continuous revival meetings, but by allowing Kingdom creativity and power to flow into communities.¹³ Any price paid in claiming more territory for God is well worth it in the exchange and that demands going to the battle field, both spiritually and physically.¹⁴

We can see throughout history that the Bible changed nations . This happened only when people were committed and applied the biblical principles in all areas of life. We can also characterize commitment with responsibility. The term responsibility can be splitted like this: - **response** according to **ability**.¹⁵ Each one of us is naturally equipped with a unique combination of abilities that can be available to serve others. We’re responsible to obtain a positive yield from our abilities. Responsible choices and behavior is called righteousness.¹⁶ While the Hebrew word focuses the tangible side of God’s blessing, the English word shows our responsibility to work for that blessing. **We are responsible to face the needs of our communities.** For example, we can transmit the gospel in public schools, and the way we’re going to do that is just through our lives which are radically obedient to God. By allowing teachers, students, families, and administrators to *experience the love of Christ through all of our actions*, with a goal of provoking them to ask questions, provoking them to curiosity. Once that happens, you can talk about whatever you want. Our ultimate motive is to love, to serve, to bless...both in our regular and in our extraordinary actions.¹⁷

Seek ye first HIS Kingdom

In short, transformation in order to achieve God’s will, despite all the obstacles that arise constantly, requires a great amount of commitment and effort. It requires knowing God’s will, applying it, and ultimately looking for extreme situations where the Kingdom has never arrived and replace the existing bad driver by principles generating **shalom**. It is radical obedience to what God calls us, that’s why He said “*But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” (Matthew 6:33). Radical obedience is a fruit of a healthy relationship between each of us and God. It requires listening to His voice and endeavoring what is asked. It requires not being apathetic when facing any unrighteous and unexpected situation but taking territory over it with work and prayer.

I would like to end with the following: transformation doesn’t have to be a great movement or another initiative from some Christians. Transformation starts when someone like you and me respond to what we are called to do. This is my dream, what is yours?



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- Social Transformation Old Testament - Landa Cope (1,2,3,4,5,6,7)
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- When Heaven Invades Earth - Bill Johnson Book That Transforms Nations - Loren Cunningham (15,16)

Movies and books that inspire us today:

- Amazing Grace, 2006
- Braveheart, 1995
- The Hiding Place, 1975
- Luther, 2003
- Invictus, 2009
- Bruchko and the Motilone Miracle – Bruce Olson (Book)